



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Patent and Trademark Office**

Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|

09/730,684 12/06/00 JONES

M D-1460

PRATT & WHITNEY  
PATENT DEPARTMENT  
MAIL STOP 132-13  
400 MAIN STREET  
EAST HARTFORD CT 06108

PM82/0913

EXAMINER

MTILLER, F

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3641

DATE MAILED:

09/13/01

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

**Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks**

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/730,684

Applicant(s)

JONES ET AL.

Examiner

Edward A. Miller

Art Unit

3641

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 12-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 12-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

Art Unit: 3641

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 12-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 12, lines 2-4, a polymer and solids together do not constitute a rocket propellant. Thus, the recitation is indefinite for implying something not stated, whereby the metes and bounds or the invention are not clear. In line 6 thereof, there is no antecedent basis for "poly(tetramethylene ether)", also lacking where ever found, as in claim 14, line 2. In claim 13, line 2, "are be" is unclear. In claims 15-17, line 1, "the oxidizer" has no antecedent basis, which also relates to "solids" in claim 12 above. In claims 15-17, there is no antecedent basis for "HTCE". Also in claims 15-17, "and further comprises..." is indefinite, as this appears to recite that the oxidizer comprises the stated ingredients, which is not true. The ultimate recitation of propellant details does not solve earlier indefiniteness, but further lacks clarity. These are exemplary, only.

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 12-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Neill et al.

O'Neill et al. teach a method of reprocessing propellants by depolymerizing the binder thereof with dilute acid or base, and thereafter recovering solids such as HMX. In col. 1, lines 40-48, the first noted binder to be so treated is the result of curing a combination of hydroxy

Art Unit: 3641

terminated polyester such as polyglycol adipate and a hydroxy terminated polyether, which is cured with a polyisocyanate to form a polyurethane polymer binder. Further ingredients such as plasticizers, curing catalysts, etc. are also to be found in the compositions, as is notoriously well known. It would have been obvious to substitute notoriously well known ingredients, including specific well known prepolymers to form the binder, and to vary specific well known method parameters to optimize the process taught there. It is well settled that optimizing a result effective variable is well within the expected ability of a person of ordinary skill in the subject art. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980), *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 105 USPQ 233 (CCPA 1955). Further, substitution of similar notoriously well known ingredients in what is otherwise the same process and which yields the same result would also have been obvious. Compare *In re KUEHL*, 177 USPQ 250 (CCPA 1973), and *In re Ochiai*, 37 USPQ2d 1127 (CA FC 1995).


This is to advance prosecution and only as the claims are understood, as it has been held improper, indeed, reversible error, to rely on speculation as to the meaning of indefinite claims, and then reject that speculative meaning on prior art. *In re Steele*, 305 F.2d 858, 134 USPQ 292 [CCPA 1962], *Ex parte Brummer*, 12 USPQ2d 1653 at 1655 [USPTO BOPAI 1989].

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

6. Any inquiry concerning either this or an earlier communication from the Examiner should be directed to Examiner Edward A. Miller at (703) 306-4163. Examiner Miller may normally be reached daily, except alternate Fridays, from about 9:30 AM to 7 PM.

If attempts to reach Examiner Miller by telephone are unsuccessful, his supervisor Mr. Carone can be reached at (703) 306-4198. The Group fax number is (703) 305-7687. If there is no answer, or for any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the application status, please call the Group receptionist at (703) 308-1113.

Miller/em  
September 9, 2001



EDWARD A. MILLER  
PRIMARY EXAMINER